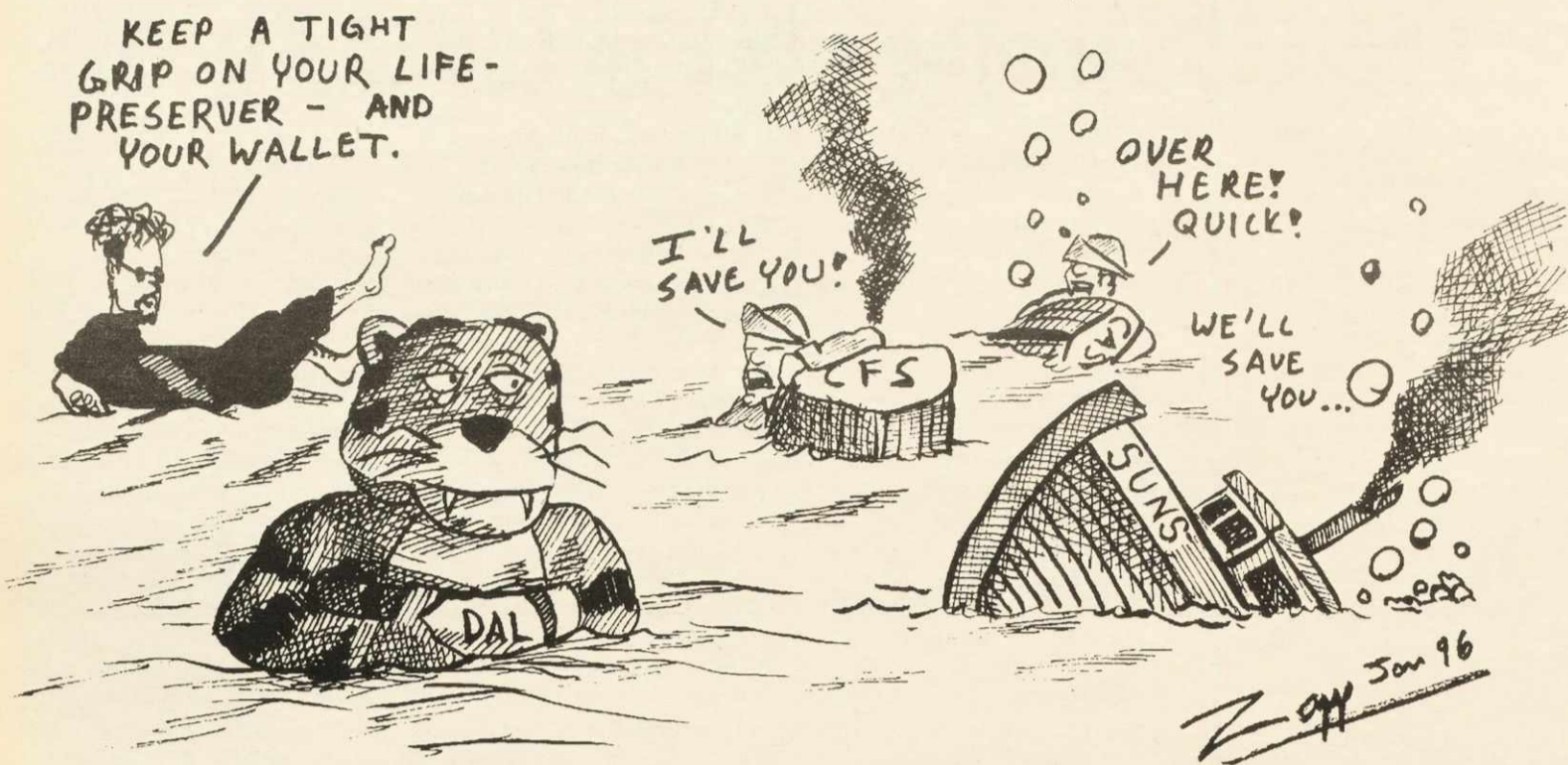


OUR SAVIOURS.



editorial

The cheese stands alone

Pipe dreams and student politics

We officially left the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) a little less than one year ago. Really, we've been out of that loop for almost two years.

Though less than the necessary eight per cent of the student body voted "No" to pull out of the Students' Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS) — in fact, the "No" side won by a meagre 65 votes — that "decision" was ratified by council less than one month later. So, our membership in SUNS expires in a matter of months.

Which leaves us in the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA). If you haven't heard, CASA is going through some growing pains. Apparently, there's a criminal investigation set to go regarding the actions of the interim National Director, Pat FitzPatrick. So, around a year after leading us onboard, our student union councillors are backpeddling like hell and may soon be asking us to vote ourselves out of CASA. To their credit, it sounds like student unions across the country may be doing the same thing.

Each of these pull-outs, on their own, might not be a bad thing. If we're in SUNS, maybe we can lobby within the province and don't really need an organ-

ized national voice. Conversely, if we're in a national organization, maybe staying in SUNS is not a big priority. And of course, if we're in CASA, it'd be stupid to pay fees to CFS for virtually the same services.

But the way things are looking, we won't be in any of these organizations in a year from now.

We're a university 10,000 students strong, and we can smugly say that we're the flagship school for our province, maybe even all of the Maritimes. But to stand alone — especially now, with the government knife freely slicing into university funding — does not seem like a smart thing to do. If you're a representative of the federal government, do you sit down with a president of an Atlantic region school with 10,000 students, or the president of a national organization with 400,000 students?

Pulling out of CFS seemed like a good idea at the time. The relationship had been deteriorating over a number of years and CASA was an up and coming organization (so it seemed). Switching was a natural choice. The fact that last year's Dalhousie student union president was one of the founding fathers of CASA may seem suspicious, but it probably

shouldn't. There's even a chance that CASA may right itself, but whether or not Dal will be involved when it's back on its feet is another story. We haven't paid them our fees yet (they were due back a while back), and, according to CASA's constitution, that suspends our membership any day now.

The point is that CFS, CASA, and SUNS all had some internal problems. Our student union representatives thought that the relationship with CFS was irreconcilable, so we left. We're leaving SUNS because some of its movers and shakers tried some backdoor politics on us during a summer meeting...maybe we took the actions of a few bad apples a little too personally and jumped ship prematurely. I mean, a poorly-worded referendum only "won" by 65 votes. And a margin of 65 votes in a school of 10,000 students (where only 1,500 cast ballots) does not a

mandate make for our DSU council. Actually, our problems with SUNS go back a bit further than this summer — SUNS were, in effect, kicked out of their office in the SUB a couple of years back when the DSU started charging them rent. And now CASA may be going down the tubes and we probably won't be around for any rebuilding.

All of these organizations have had problems, some of them pretty serious. But if we keep leaving when we don't get our way, or when we lose a political battle or two, we'll soon be out in the cold.

Maybe we should take another crack at one of these organizations and stick around for the rebuilding process. Then, instead of being out on our own with no viable student lobby groups to join, we just might be an integral part of a body that has leadership and direction.

SAM MCCAIG

opinion
Playtime
will soon
be over

I just can't seem to get up the energy to write anything, as of late. It's not that there isn't anything that hasn't bothered me — that could never happen — but I just haven't had the desire to share my angst. This is probably due to the fact that I have come to the conclusion that this is not the real world.

I know that I might be behind a few people on this realization, but it is true. Student life is not real. It's actually the most unimportant time in my life. I don't know about the rest of you, but I had a life before I came to this god-forsaken corner of buttfuck nowhere.

I had a job and a social life. I had money and did things. I was politically active, and I worked hard in my community to help make it a better place. In fact, I had a whole existence. But, this is not the case here at Dalhousie.

Life, here at Dalhousie, is hardly life at all. Just think about those things that grind your ass to the bone on a day-to-day basis. Are they important? I would hazard a guess that rated against the problems of a real life, the inanities of your so-called "big" problems here at school, would appear to be just that — inane.

I know that in the past, I have written on the subject of apathy here on the Dal campus, and to a certain degree, I still feel that people should be involved in the goings-on at Dal. But I have taken on the opinion as of late, that most of what happens here is of absolutely no importance. Who really cares about what is going on inside the Dal Student Union? I can say that I don't. It doesn't bother me at all any more. I couldn't care at all if they sold the building out from under us.

"Why," you might be asking yourself, "has Joe made this startling reversal in his view of things?"

When I was away from here over the break, I had some of real

...cont'd on next page: "Play"

letters

Smoke policy overdue

To the Gazette:

I have been a student at Dal for three years now and prior to this January I have never eaten in the Union Market, never lounged in the Greenroom, nor have I ever spent anytime in the SUB other than in September bookstore lines. The reason for this unofficial boycott was the smoky haze that filled the air of the building. The air of the Union Market was so stale and smoky that the very thought of eating in there was repugnant. However, since the change in smoking policy was implemented, I have eaten in the Union Market everyday. I applaud the DSU for finally bringing Dal's Student

Union Building into the 90's with their long overdue smoking policy.

In response to "Smoker's Rights," if you consider smoking a 'right' then I can understand your frustration (kind of), but smoking; polluting the air and sucking up health care costs for your eventual cancer, stroke, emphysema and/or heart disease is NOT a right! There is a reason why the other university's no-smoking policies drove smokers to our union market "to indulge in a smoke while studying," the reason is that smoking kills. Dal has just been a little slow at recognizing this fact. I would like to thank the DSU for making the SUB a better and healthier place for all students.

Jo Pedersen

the Dalhousie Gazette

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